



HMIC Inspection Report

West Midlands Police

October 2007



West Midlands Police – HMIC Inspection Report

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Contents

Introduction to HMIC Inspections

Programmed frameworks
Risk-based frameworks
The grading process
Developing practice
Future HMIC inspection activity

Force Overview and Context

Geographical description of force area
Demographic profile of force area
Strategic priorities
Force developments since 2006

Findings

National summary of judgements

Force summary of judgements

Neighbourhood Policing

Performance Management

Protecting Vulnerable People – Overview

Protecting Vulnerable People – Child Abuse

Protecting Vulnerable People – Domestic Violence

Protecting Vulnerable People – Public Protection

Protecting Vulnerable People – Missing Persons

Appendix: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

October 2007

Introduction to HMIC Inspections

For a century and a half, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been charged with examining and improving the efficiency of the police service in England and Wales, with the first HM Inspectors (HMIs) being appointed under the provisions of the County and Borough Police Act 1856. In 1962, the Royal Commission on the Police formally acknowledged HMIC's contribution to policing.

HMIs are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Home Secretary and report to HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, who is the Home Secretary's principal professional policing adviser and is independent both of the Home Office and of the police service. HMIC's principal statutory duties are set out in the Police Act 1996. For more information, please visit HMIC's website at <http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/>.

In 2006, HMIC conducted a broad assessment of all 43 Home Office police forces in England and Wales, examining 23 areas of activity. This baseline assessment had followed a similar process in 2005 and has thus created a rich evidence base of strengths and weaknesses across the country. However, it is now necessary for HMIC to focus its inspection effort on those areas of policing that are not data-rich and where qualitative assessment is the only feasible way of judging both current performance and the prospects for improvement. This, together with the critical factor that HMIC should concentrate its scrutiny on high-risk areas of policing – in terms of risk both to the public and to the service's reputation – pointed inexorably to a focus on what are known collectively as 'protective services'. In addition, there is a need to apply professional judgement to some key aspects of leadership and governance, where some quantitative measures exist but a more rounded assessment is appropriate.

Having reached this view internally, HMIC then consulted key stakeholders, including the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). A consensus emerged that HMIC could add greater value by undertaking fewer but more probing inspections. Stakeholders concurred with the emphasis on protective services but requested that Neighbourhood Policing remain a priority for inspection until there is evidence that it has been embedded in everyday police work.

HMIC uses a rigorous and transparent methodology to conduct its inspections and reach conclusions and judgements. All evidence will be gathered, verified and then assessed against an agreed set of national standards, in the form of specific grading criteria (SGC). However, the main purpose of inspection is not to make judgements but to drive improvements in policing. Both professional and lay readers are urged, therefore, to focus not on the headline grades but on the opportunities for improvement identified within the text of this report.

Programmed frameworks

This report contains assessments of the first three key areas of policing to be inspected under HMIC's new programme of work:

1. Neighbourhood Policing;
2. performance management; and
3. protecting vulnerable people.

Neighbourhood Policing has been inspected not only because it is a key government priority but also, and more importantly, because it addresses a fundamental need for a style of policing that is rooted in and responds to local concerns. The police service must, of course, offer protection from high-level threats such as terrorism and organised criminality, but it

October 2007

also has a key role in tackling the unacceptable behaviour of the minority of people who threaten the quality of life of law-abiding citizens.

Performance management is an activity largely hidden from public view, although members of the public are directly affected by poor performance on the part of their local force. This inspection has focused on the need for forces to maximise the opportunities for performance improvement. It also posed questions as to whether forces have an accurate picture of how they are doing and the capability to respond to changing priorities. This area was selected for inspection because it is a key factor in delivering good performance across the board.

Protecting vulnerable people covers four related areas – child abuse, domestic violence, public protection and missing persons – that address the critically important role of the police in protecting the public from potentially serious harm. In the 2006 baseline assessment this was the worst performing area and raised the most serious concerns for HMIC and others. As a result, this area was prioritised for scrutiny in 2007.

Risk-based frameworks

In addition to its programmed inspection work, HMIC continues to monitor performance across a range of policing activity, notably those areas listed in the table below.

HMIC risk-based frameworks
Fairness and equality in service delivery
Volume crime reduction
Volume crime investigation
Improving forensic performance
Criminal justice processes
Reducing anti-social behaviour
Contact management
Training, development and organisational learning

While these activities will not be subject to routine inspection, evidence of a significant decline in performance would prompt consideration of inspection. For 150 years, HMIC has maintained an ongoing relationship with every force. This allows it to identify and support forces when specific issues of concern arise. On a more formal basis, HMIC participates in the Home Office Police Performance Steering Group and Joint Performance Review Group, which have a role in monitoring and supporting police performance in crime reduction, crime investigation and public confidence.

HMIC conducts inspections of basic command units (BCUs), also on a risk-assessed basis, using the Going Local 3 methodology. Combining these various strands of inspection evidence allows HMIC to form a comprehensive picture of both individual force performance and the wider national picture.

October 2007

The grading process

Grades awarded by HMIC are a reflection of the performance delivered by the force over the assessment period April 2006 to July 2007. One of four grades can be awarded, according to performance assessed against the SGC (for the full list of SGC, see <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/methodologies/baseline-introduction/ba-methodology-06/?version=1>).

Excellent

This grade describes the highest level of performance in service delivery and achieving full compliance with codes of practice or national guidance. It is expected that few forces will achieve this very high standard for a given activity. To achieve Excellent, forces are expected to meet **all** of the criteria set out in the Fair SGC and the vast majority of those set out in Good. In addition, two other factors will attract consideration of an Excellent grade:

- The force should be recognised, or be able to act, as a 'beacon' to others, and be accepted within the service as a source of leading-edge practice. Evidence that other forces have successfully imported practices would demonstrate this.
- HMIC is committed to supporting innovation and we would expect Excellent forces to have introduced and evaluated new ways of delivering or improving performance.

Good

Good is defined in the Collins English Dictionary as 'of a high quality or level' and denotes performance above the minimum standard. To reach this level, forces have to meet in full the criteria set out in Fair and most of the criteria set out in Good.

Fair

Fair is the delivery of an acceptable level of service, which meets national threshold standards where these exist. To achieve a Fair grading, forces must meet all of the significant criteria set out in the Fair SGC. HMIC would expect that, across most activities, the largest number of grades will be awarded at this level.

Poor

A Poor grade represents an unacceptably low level of service. To attract this very critical grade, a force will have fallen well short of a significant number of criteria set out in the SGC for Fair. In some cases, failure to achieve a single critical criterion may alone warrant a Poor grade. Such dominant criteria will always be flagged in the SGC but may also reflect a degree of professional judgement on the level of risk being carried by the force.

Developing practice

In addition to assessing force performance, one of HMIC's key roles is to identify and share good practice across the police service. Much good practice is identified as HMIC conducts its assessments and is reflected as a strength in the body of the report. In addition, each force is given the opportunity to submit examples of its good practice. HMIC has selected three or more of these examples to publish in this report. The key criteria for each example are that the work has been evaluated by the force and the good practice is easily transferable to other forces (each force has provided a contact name and telephone number or email address, should further information be required). HMIC has not conducted any independent evaluation of the examples of good practice provided.

October 2007

Future HMIC inspection activity

Although HMIC will continue to maintain a watching brief on all performance areas, its future inspection activity (see provisional timescales below) will be determined by a risk assessment process. Protective services will be at the core of inspection programmes, tailored to capacity, capability and the likelihood of exposure to threats from organised criminality, terrorism and so on. Until its full implementation in April 2008, Neighbourhood Policing will also demand attention. Conversely, those areas (such as volume crime) where performance is captured by statutory performance indicators (SPIs), iQuanta and other objective evidence will receive scrutiny only where performance is deteriorating, as described above.

The Government has announced that, in real terms, there will be little or no growth in police authority/force budgets over the next three years. Forces will therefore have to maintain, and in some areas improve, performance without additional central support or funding. This in itself creates a risk to police delivery and HMIC has therefore included a strategic resource management assessment for all forces in its future inspection programme.

Planned Inspection areas
Serious and organised crime
Major crime
Neighbourhood Policing
Strategic resource management
Customer service and accessibility
Critical incident management
Professional standards
Public order
Civil contingencies
Information management
Strategic roads policing
Leadership

Force Overview and Context

Geographical description of force area

West Midlands Police (WMP) is the second largest police force in the country (in terms of police officer establishment) after the Metropolitan Police Service. It covers an area of 348 square miles and serves a population of almost 2.6 million people (1,049,186 households). The force area sits at the very heart of the country and covers the three major cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton as well as the busy and thriving districts of Sandwell, Walsall, Solihull and Dudley. The majority of the area is densely populated but there are some rural areas around Solihull. The region's economy, once heavily dependent on traditional manufacturing, is now diverse, with a wide range of industries and business services. Many of its heavy industries date back to the Industrial Revolution. However, areas of economic prosperity contrast with areas of local economic decline. In recent years, the area has seen the development of commercial and shopping areas, complemented by a wide range of leisure amenities such as the National Exhibition Centre, National Indoor Arena, theatres, art galleries, many large conference facilities and thriving social facilities. West Midlands hosts two Premiership football teams as well as four Football League clubs. The region is well served by rail and road links and an international airport; up to 28,000 vehicles per day use the area's major roads, and the motorway network is one of the busiest in Europe.

Demographic profile of force area

The population of the West Midlands is very diverse. At approximately 18%, the percentage of the population from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups is significantly above the national average, and 10% of the population was born outside the UK. Average earnings and house prices for the region are lower than the national averages; unemployment in the area ranges from 9.3% in Sandwell to 4.4% in Solihull.

Strategic priorities

The force vision is to 'Reduce crime and disorder and make our communities feel safer'. The strategic plan states the following priorities.

- Provide a citizen-focused police service which responds to the needs of communities and individuals, especially victims and witnesses, inspires public confidence in the police, particularly among BME communities, and reduces people's concerns about crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and disorder.
- Deliver a responsive, high-quality service that engages effectively with communities and reduces ASB, crime and disorder.
- Reduce overall crime – including violent and drug-related crime – in line with the Government's public service agreements. Through this plan, WMP reaffirms its commitment to substantial crime reduction over the next three years.
- Take action with partners to increase sanction detection rates and target prolific and other priority offenders (PPOs). Improve performance in detections, increase the satisfaction of victims and witnesses, and focus on locally identified prolific offenders through joint working with partners.
- Combat serious and organised crime, within and across force boundaries. Tackle force-wide crimes and incidents and those that occur across operational command unit

October 2007

(OCU) boundaries while working on major issues with the Serious Organised Crime Agency.

- Ensure that the necessary organisational support and resources are in place to deliver policing throughout the West Midlands area.

Force developments since 2006

The force is building on the strengths reported in the 2006 baseline assessment, with established processes in place to address risks that may affect force performance and organisational reputation. It has an impressive performance regime, which drives quantitative performance against targets and captures qualitative analysis through survey activity.

Last year the force was graded Fair overall for protecting vulnerable people (PVP), with concern expressed about officer resilience in the face of very heavy workloads, and in some places inadequate supervision and quality assurance. It has reviewed its current structures and processes and has sought to identify good practice from elsewhere to strengthen its arrangements. The force faces a challenge in securing consistency; while there are pockets of good practice, service quality in other areas falls short of the standard that it strives to provide.

The force continues to make commendable progress in embedding Neighbourhood Policing and should meet the implementation target date of spring 2008. Some 333 neighbourhoods have been identified, served by 223 neighbourhood teams comprising police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) and special constables (SCs). Noteworthy good practice includes strong partnership engagement to deal with issues that matter to local communities.

Findings

National summary of judgements

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Neighbourhood Policing				
Neighbourhood Policing	6	14	21	2
Performance management				
Performance management	6	29	8	0
Protecting vulnerable people				
Child abuse	3	17	21	2
Domestic violence	1	13	27	2
Public protection	2	16	23	2
Missing persons	1	21	21	0

Force summary of judgements

Neighbourhood Policing	Grade
Neighbourhood Policing	Excellent
Performance management	Grade
Performance management	Excellent
Protecting vulnerable people	Grade
Child abuse	Fair
Domestic violence	Fair
Public protection	Fair
Missing persons	Good

October 2007

Neighbourhood Policing

GRADE	EXCELLENT
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	14	21	2

National contextual factors

The national Neighbourhood Policing programme was launched by ACPO in April 2005 to support the Government's vision of a policing service which is both accessible and responsive to the needs of local people. It was anticipated that, by April 2007, every area across England and Wales would have a Neighbourhood Policing presence appropriate to local needs, with all Neighbourhood Policing teams in place by April 2008. For local communities this means:

- increased numbers of PCSOs patrolling their streets, addressing ASB and building relationships with local people;
- access both to information about policing in their local area and to a point of contact in their Neighbourhood Policing team; and
- having the opportunity to tell the police about the issues that are causing them concern and helping to shape the response to those issues (Home Office, May 2006).

By focusing on the key areas of resources, familiarity/accessibility, problem identification and joint problem solving, this inspection has identified the extent to which Neighbourhood Policing is being implemented. It has also examined forces' capability and commitment to sustain implementation beyond April 2008.

Contextual factors

WMP has established Neighbourhood Policing within all of its communities and is successfully deploying the skills of a range of officers, PCSOs, SCs, police staff and members of the wider policing family jointly to solve problems. WMP clearly aims to deliver services which enhance the feelings of safety for the people living in, working in or visiting the West Midlands. The force has identified 333 neighbourhoods, within 56 sectors; these are policed by 223 teams with a complement of 1,640 officers dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing. This represents an average of 24% of officer strength per OCU dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing.

The force's highly devolved structure facilitates innovation. This has provided the opportunity for the force's 21 OCUs to develop many sound approaches to Neighbourhood Policing, designed to meet local needs in conjunction with partners and the community. The force is perceived to be a 'Beacon' force and has been visited by other forces, researchers from the Home Office and other agencies looking specifically at Neighbourhood Policing with a view to learning from and sharing its good practice.

An important contextual factor is the policing environment of the West Midlands, one of the most demanding in the country. Few forces outside London better represent the 'mission stretch' from local policing through to national counter-terrorist work, while maintaining good

volume crime performance and an evident commitment to citizen focus and quality of service.

Strengths

- There is substantive evidence that that Neighbourhood Policing is an embedded philosophy running through the force. The Neighbourhood Policing project manager receives good support from chief officers generally and in particular from the ACPO lead – the assistant chief constable (ACC) (intelligence) – in the delivery of the project in terms of direction, empowerment and a budget to deliver.
- The force has a detailed project plan for the implementation of Neighbourhood Policing; OCU commanders are accountable for delivery to the public and partners, and are held to account internally by the chief officer team and police authority (PA).
- Work is currently taking place at force level to mainstream the integration of Neighbourhood Policing culture and philosophy into headquarters (HQ) departments. These include force intelligence, force community safety bureau (CSB), performance review, the National Intelligence Model development unit (NIMDU) and crime support.
- Clear and detailed guidance has been issued to the OCUs on how best to communicate the Neighbourhood Policing strategy, both internally and externally. Communications and reassurance officers are in post on each OCU.
- The force has achieved full Neighbourhood Policing implementation and 100% coverage across every OCU. PCSOs are well integrated into neighbourhood teams, and the force met its commitment to have the full complement of 751 PCSOs in place by the end of April 2007.
- WMP works with numerous partners at the neighbourhood level and in particular with local authorities. Without exception, partners report positive working relationships with Neighbourhood Policing teams and their managers.
- Local delivery groups ensure the active engagement of partners in the provision of neighbourhood management. Neighbourhood action plans are produced as a result of consultation with community representatives.
- An overarching Feeling the Difference survey, which incorporates seven data sets – including ‘harmoniousness’, as defined by the Audit Commission – is an important source of information. A tier of survey activity sitting below the Feeling the Difference survey is being introduced through tracker panels. These comprise members of the public and gather detailed information to inform the priorities of Neighbourhood Policing teams.
- The force supports partnership working by providing opportunities for communities and partners to secure funding in support of clearly defined community action plans. A neighbourhood initiatives fund of £200,000 has been established, from which the public and partners can bid for amounts of up to £5,000 for local projects.
- Partners are actively involved in joint problem solving and tasking through neighbourhood tasking meetings, whereby community priorities drive the activities of Neighbourhood Policing teams. OCUs have joint targets with partners and robust accountability mechanisms help to determine which agency will take the lead in resolving problems.

October 2007

- NIMDU has developed a training package to re-energise NIM both within WMP and embracing external partners. This incorporates community intelligence and long-term problem solving. Principal analysts/staff drawing up corporate templates for the joint strategic assessments and tactical assessments take into consideration issues such as Neighbourhood Policing local priorities, ASB and signal events.
- Joint strategic assessments are used to identify and address neighbourhood issues. This process operates on four levels from level 0 to level 3, although level 0 is not yet formalised across the force area.
- OCU tasking and co-ordination (T&C) minutes contain clear evidence of the links made between Neighbourhood Policing and the NIM process, with detailed data supporting consideration of neighbourhood issues and associated performance. Local authority wardens attend daily tasking meetings with the police, focusing on hotspots and joint problem solving.
- Analysts use multiple data sources to inform their assessments and products. These include data from local authorities, the fire and rescue service, ambulance service, registered social landlords and drug action teams. Some analysts have access to enhanced 'open source' information via the internet.
- Problem solving is evidently well embedded in all 21 OCUs across the force. Data from a range of partners is used in T&C and partner resources are regularly used to impact upon identified problems. There has been a drive through the force intelligence bureau to ensure that the language used in jointly prepared documents, including NIM products, is accessible and not clouded by police jargon.
- The force has recently appointed a researcher to process attendee checklists, which are obtained from members of the public who attend local meetings. These are used to inform Neighbourhood Policing teams of specific local issues. Research undertaken shows that, of the attendees at local meetings, 97% believe that the meetings discuss relevant issues and 99% would re-attend.
- Neighbourhood Policing support units and communications room staff have access to appropriate contact details for the neighbourhood teams, so that the public can be directed to the local team.
- Developmental activity through internal self-assessment and external assessments has informed OCU needs. A document entitled 'What does a good OCU look like?' (in the context of Neighbourhood Policing) was designed as a service guide for OCUs. This led to the identification of some internal training needs and fuelled activity on what should be recorded in the corporate memory.
- The force strategic plan, local policing plan and human resources strategy documents emphasise the commitment to providing a citizen-focused service, placing importance on consultation and managing community issues at a local level. Information and data from the Feeling the Difference surveys relating to community views and satisfaction levels are used to evaluate and develop priorities for the future.
- In providing locally tailored services, the force has not lost sight of the key links between Neighbourhood Policing, serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism (CT). One of the ACCs has a portfolio combining CT and community cohesion to make these links explicitly clear on a daily basis.

October 2007

- A comprehensive training needs analysis identified a range of police and partner training opportunities which are being addressed in association with partners. The force uses external consultants to deliver leadership training, specifically in relation to neighbourhood management for sergeants, inspectors and partners. In addition to training courses the force has held a number of seminars, established focus groups, placed training material on the force website and produced a PCSOs' manual.
- Force intelligence is working closely with training to develop the NIM products and processes for Neighbourhood Policing in relation to police and partner responses. Included in this work is a risk-based assessment to gathering community intelligence.
- The force captures and disseminates best practice via quarterly project leader surgeries at inspector level, to discuss and analyse problems and potential resolution. A casebook of best practice is being built on the intranet to allow staff access to new ideas.
- Neighbourhood Policing has been integrated into the call-handling function. Training has been provided to raise staff awareness, while an external company was commissioned to realign the force gazetteer to the new neighbourhood structure and thus ensure that force systems were compliant with the revised structure.
- Neighbourhood Policing teams are held accountable for problem solving and delivery of locally agreed plans. There is a focus on crime reduction, particularly ASB and criminal damage issues, and evidence of joint target setting and monitoring with partners. The OCU commanders gave evidence of tangible improvements to community relations at meetings. The performance review department information (PRDi), surveys and T&C documents clearly incorporate performance indicators relating to ASB, community cohesion and public confidence.
- As is evident from the Excellent grade awarded for Performance Management, WMP has successfully embedded a strong learning and self-improvement culture throughout the organisation.
- WMP is one of eight forces piloting key diagnostic indicators for Neighbourhood Policing. The emerging results and learning from this and local innovations will shape the next phase of performance framework development and delivery.
- Each OCU has established a key individual network (KIN) to consult local people on their priorities. The KINs also conduct community impact assessments to ensure that policing objectives are achieved and have the support of communities. The force has developed a strategic KIN involving organisations that represent groups of people from across the West Midlands and from all six strands of diversity. The force regularly consults and engages with the PA independent advisory group for race equality in policing, the government office for the West Midlands, community facilitators and other significant players in relation to Neighbourhood Policing issues.
- The force uses after care forms to engage with victims wherever the level of service has not proven satisfactory. These are referred to a single point of contact (SPOC) on each OCU and actioned within seven days. Where timescales are not complied with, the problem is raised with the force research manager for intervention. Only three forms were returned which were not actioned within the timescales in the last year. This demonstrated the quality of service commitment displayed by the force in providing a good service to victims.

October 2007

- Communities in the pathfinder OCU inform local priorities through neighbourhood focus groups, surgeries, email, letters and internet websites. Deployment decisions are influenced by these priorities and the outcomes are fed back through the 'Mailer' system. The OCU administers a post code survey below the level of the force Feeling the Difference survey to identify community issues and satisfaction at neighbourhood level.
- The Special Constabulary has 951 officers, all of whom are assigned to Neighbourhood Policing teams. It is clear that SCs are valued for their contribution, with reward mechanisms on a par with those for regular officers.
- Succession planning is reviewed by people development boards, which consider training, people, development, abstractions, shift patterns, vacancies and sickness, and link into the reward and recognition panels. Appropriate reward and recognition mechanisms for Neighbourhood Policing staff are in place both at force and OCU level.
- As part of the inspection process, a telephone survey of 100 randomly selected residents was carried out, asking them six questions about their experience and view of how Neighbourhood Policing is being delivered. Five of the six categories were within the national average range, with one falling below the national average range.
- The force proposes to maintain the Neighbourhood Policing project team until April 2008, following which it will establish a full-time SPOC for Neighbourhood Policing issues.

Work in progress

- Work is currently under way to ensure that Neighbourhood Policing is fully integrated with other primary functions. For example, in contact management, alternative points of reference for the public such as myneighbourhood.com are being developed.
- Public perception of ASB within the West Midlands area is below the most similar force average for 2006/07 but it should be noted that its performance has shown a consistent and significant improvement since the beginning of 2006.
- Training is provided to all staff in relation to the Contact Counts agenda. Staff receive a booklet setting out the standards required of them and this document is currently being revised and evaluated to incorporate Neighbourhood Policing issues.

Areas for improvement

- A lack of understanding of the role of Neighbourhood Policing teams among some officers who deliver response policing needs to be addressed. Some front-line response officers were unclear as to the role that Neighbourhood Policing teams play in resolving long-term problems and how this ultimately supports demand management. The force should consider using the OCU communications and reassurance officers to foster a greater understanding.
- Neighbourhood Policing abstraction policy recognises the difference between the OCUs and sets out a framework of expectations. Due to the response shift patterns on some OCUs, there is evidence of Neighbourhood Policing officers being abstracted; abstraction from neighbourhood roles is not significant, but a more robust monitoring system is needed to provide greater assurance.

October 2007

- The OCU Neighbourhood Policing leads benefited from regular meetings with the Neighbourhood Policing project team, particularly in sharing good practice. These meetings are now in abeyance but in light of the eventual dissolution of the Neighbourhood Policing project team, the force could benefit from regular meetings between local Neighbourhood Policing leads and the SPOC, to continue sharing good practice and innovation.

Performance Management

GRADE	EXCELLENT
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	29	8	0

National contextual factors

There is no single accepted model of performance management across the police service but any such model or framework must be fit for purpose. Ideally, forces should demonstrate that individuals at every level of the organisation understand their contribution to converting resources into agreed delivery, and know how they will be held to account. On a daily basis, first-line supervisors monitor, support and quality assure the performance of their teams. At the other end of the spectrum, chief officer-led performance meetings – often based loosely on the American Compstat model – are a vehicle for accountability and improvement. Robust leadership, a commitment to improvement and reliable, real-time information systems are all critical factors in effective performance management.

There is no mechanistic link between overall force performance and the grade awarded in this framework. The grade is based on the quality of the force's processes that enable it to identify and react to changes in performance.

Contextual factors

WMP is building upon the strengths evidenced in the 2006 baseline assessment, with established processes in place to capture strategic issues which may affect force performance and organisational reputation. The force has a clear performance framework which supports not only quantitative performance analysis against targets, but also qualitative analysis through survey activity. WMP has a forward-looking approach to performance management and has recently introduced a balanced scorecard approach to the assessment of OCU performance, which will enhance the existing performance regime.

The force strategic assessment incorporates consideration of critical risks to the force from a range of issues, including those relating to protective services. These risks are considered from the perspective of strategic risk, operational risk, resourcing and hazards.

Strengths

- The force is widely perceived to be a 'Beacon' force and in the last 12 months has been visited on numerous occasions by other forces and outside bodies, looking specifically at their use of Six Sigma, Signals from Noise software, and the customised Balanced Scorecard.
- WMP is committed to sustaining the high performance levels that have been achieved in recent years in the face of rising expectations and pressure on resources. In conjunction with the PA, the force set a range of challenging but realistic targets around national and local priorities for 2006/07. These aimed to improve the impact that policing services have in reducing crime and disorder and making communities feel safer.

October 2007

- In setting these targets, the force has taken account of the National community safety plans, feedback from consultation with the public, the force strategic assessment and the requirement to continuously improve performance. This year it has also set Neighbourhood Policing indicators which reflect local priorities specific to policing in the West Midlands. These include a target to tackle ASB, misuse of drugs and rowdy nuisance behaviour, in association with local partnership agencies such as the crime and disorder reduction partnerships and local criminal justice boards.
- The force produces a comprehensive strategic assessment of performance on a monthly basis. The PRDi is a strategic overview of current force performance, which provides managers with up-to-date, accurate data and helps in identifying current and future opportunities and challenges. It highlights those categories of crime that offer the greatest leverage and allows managers to benchmark their team's performance and achieve real improvements over time. The force has shown innovative practice in incorporating data which relates to locally based community reassurance, tackling issues of safety, harmoniousness and confidence.
- The force strategic assessment incorporates consideration of critical risks to the force from death, serious injury, a breakdown in community cohesion and repeat victimisation. These risks are considered from the perspective of strategic risk, operational resourcing and hazards. Work has been undertaken to ensure that information and intelligence is communicated in the right language to the right audience. The strategic assessment is updated on an ongoing basis to inform the force's strategic plans.
- Chief officer portfolios have been realigned so that information management is now incorporated into the intelligence portfolio. This means that the force can integrate the NIM into information gathering from the outset of public contact.
- The PA performance committee receives appropriate updates in relation to force performance in a timely manner.
- Operation Momentum – which focused on reducing total volume crime on OCUs – linked budget to outcomes, partnership working and organisational learning. A fundamental part of the operation was learning from both success and failure, and payment is made to OCUs upon the receipt of the results analysis of funded operations.
- Activity analysis, survey results and activity-based costing are used to manage the front-line policing measure and assist OCUs in the effective deployment of resources.
- Survey data is used to monitor performance and inform decision making; in particular, low-level surveys are conducted to assess public perceptions of community reassurance.
- Analysts use multiple data sources to inform their assessments and products. These include data from local authorities, the fire and rescue service, ambulance service, registered social landlords and drug action teams. Some analysts have access to enhanced 'open source' information via the internet.
- An overarching Feeling the Difference survey – which incorporates seven data sets, including 'harmoniousness' as defined by the Audit Commission – is an important source of information. A tier of survey activity sitting below the Feeling the Difference

October 2007

survey is being introduced through tracker panels. These comprise members of the public and gather detailed information to inform the priorities of Neighbourhood Policing teams.

- The Special Constabulary has its own performance meeting on a quarterly basis to review the contribution made by SCs. The meeting examines public reassurance, training, OCU strength, duties performed, hours assigned to key crime and value for money.
- Corporate development is currently working with OCUs to develop a performance management framework for Neighbourhood Policing, based upon outcome measures.
- The force has a forward-looking approach to performance management and is currently delivering performance management training to sergeants and inspectors as part of the process to embed continuous improvement throughout the force. The force has implemented a five-day training course which provides an important link between managing performance and staff in front-line policing roles.
- At a more strategic level, senior management team (SMT) members are receiving training in Six Sigma. This is designed to allow managers to apply LEAN principles to problem solving and improving efficiency. (LEAN systems thinking focuses on ways in which wasted effort can be eliminated from processes to ensure optimum efficiency.)
- Performance management processes are applied to discrete policing operations and initiatives, with demonstrable links to outcomes, budgets, partnership working and organisational learning.
- Organised crime and CT feature predominantly in the force and OCU control strategies. PCSOs and Neighbourhood Policing teams are aware of their role in terms of capturing community information/intelligence that informs force activity on a local level. There is strong and consistent evidence of cross-border collaborative work which takes into consideration policing demand that extends beyond the force's geographical area.
- The force has clear mechanisms to hold staff to account for performance, monitored and reviewed at force, OCU, team and individual level. Good performance is recognised by appropriate rewards and sanctions. Monthly and annual awards for the best performing OCU are presented by chief officers.

Work in progress

- A balanced scorecard approach to assessing the performance of OCUs is currently being implemented. This approach will be evaluated by the force over the coming months to ensure that it meets the needs of both the force and OCUs. It is unclear at this time how this approach will integrate with the NIM process.
- The performance review department is currently working with OCUs to develop a performance management framework for Neighbourhood Policing, which will capture outcome measures and apply the same rigour and reliability as that pertaining to response team work. This is potentially good practice.

Areas for improvement

- Although the force publishes comprehensive performance information that assists managers in holding staff to account for performance, management information on aspects of public protection could be made more accessible.
- The force could make greater use of comparative performance in relation to most similar basic command units (MSBCUs). Internal comparison on an OCU-by-OCU basis is undoubtedly very powerful but opportunities should not be missed to benchmark against external peers, and thus learn from good performance/practice elsewhere.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Overview

National contextual factors

The assessment framework for Protecting Vulnerable People was first developed in 2006 as part of HMIC's baseline assessment programme. It replaced two existing frameworks – Reducing/Investigating Hate Crime and Crimes against Vulnerable Victims – which focussed on hate crimes (predominantly racially motivated), domestic violence and child protection. Following consultation with practitioners and ACPO leads, a single framework was introduced with four components – domestic violence, the investigation and prevention of child abuse, the management of sex and dangerous offenders, and vulnerable missing persons. Although the four areas are discrete, they are also linked and share a common theme – they deal with vulnerable victims where there is a high risk that an incident can quickly become critical, and where a poor police response is both life-threatening and poses severe reputational risks for the force.

This year's inspection has been carried out using similar assessment standards as those in 2006. These highlight the importance of leadership and accountability; policy implementation; information management; staffing, workload and supervision; performance monitoring and management; training; the management of risk; and partnership working.

The work carried out by forces to protect the public, particularly those most vulnerable to risk of serious harm, is complex and challenging. No single agency, including the police, has the capacity to deliver the required response on its own. Success is therefore, dependent on effective multi-agency working and there are a number of established partnerships, involving a wide range of services and professionals, aimed at ensuring that an integrated approach is adopted to protecting those most vulnerable to risk of serious harm.

Contextual factors overview

The force achieved an overall Fair grading for PVP in the baseline assessment 2006. The 2007 inspection gives assessment grades for the four individual elements of child abuse, domestic abuse, missing persons and public protection. PVP deals with vulnerable victims where there is a high risk that an incident can quickly become critical, and where a poor police response poses risks for those concerned. The interdependencies between child abuse investigation, domestic abuse, missing persons and the management of sex and violent offenders are recognised by the force. Each OCU has specialist officers to protect vulnerable people, based in child abuse investigation units (CAIUs) and CSB.

The force has undertaken a significant and fundamental review of the way in which it delivers services to protect vulnerable people, among which is the need for a tighter corporate framework which identifies clear, non-negotiable standards. This internal review has revealed a number of areas for development, which confirm the HMIC inspection findings.

Strengths

- Specialist staff engaged in PVP demonstrate real commitment to their role and constantly strive to deliver a high quality of service.
- Many of the OCU-based teams responsible for PVP are co-located and regularly share information across the four disciplines.

October 2007

- The force has a well-established structure to provide welfare support and interventions for staff in the PVP business area, including access to external resources. Duty of care indices have been developed which allow the force to assess how well individual OCUs are succeeding in providing support to their staff. Welfare support presents opportunities for the force to identify wider staffing issues within the PVP disciplines, which are raised with OCUs and the ACPO portfolio holder as appropriate.
- Non-specialist staff have access to adequate briefing materials and information in relation to PVP work across the four disciplines.

Work in progress

- The force has recognised structural weaknesses inherent in the split of chief officer portfolio responsibilities, which have impeded the strategic management of public protection issues. This has resulted in the realignment of the intelligence and public protection portfolios, under the ACC (intelligence) and ACC (crime) respectively. This has allowed a greater degree of focus to be applied to improving service delivery in these areas, under the guidance of a single chief officer.
- Integration of the child and adult protection unit (CAPU), the joint public protection unit (JPPU) and the child exploitation investigation team (CEIT) provides the force with an opportunity to create a tighter corporate framework for PVP, through a more robust audit and inspection regime across the frameworks.

Areas for improvement

- The force's OCUs operate within a highly devolved structure. Devolution has allowed the development of many different approaches to PVP, but some are more effective than others in terms of service provision and managing the risks associated with this area of business. The force would benefit from a tighter corporate framework for PVP that clearly identifies non-negotiable standards or approaches while encouraging scope for innovation to stimulate the spread of good practice.
- OCU-based specialist staff have received various levels of training to perform their roles, dependent upon the investment made by the individual OCU. The force should establish a common minimum training requirement for specialist staff.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Child Abuse

GRADE	FAIR
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
3	17	21	2

National contextual factors

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on the police to ‘safeguard and promote the welfare of children’; safeguarding children, therefore, is a fundamental part of the duties of all police officers. All police forces, however, also have specialist units which, although they vary in structure, size and remit, normally take primary responsibility for investigating child abuse cases. Officers in these units work closely with other agencies, particularly Social Services, to ensure that co-ordinated action is taken to protect specific children who are suffering, or who are at risk of suffering, significant harm. The Children Act 2004 also requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). This is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

Membership of LSCBs includes representatives of the relevant local authority and its Board partners, notably the police, probation, youth offending teams, strategic health authorities and primary care trusts, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts, the Connexions service, Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service, Secure Training Centres and prisons.

Contextual factors

Child abuse investigation is a priority for WMP and is incorporated in the force strategic assessment and control strategy. The force has specialist child abuse investigation officers who are based in OCU-based CAIUs. Some OCUs ‘cluster’ to provide a service for two or more OCUs. The CAIUs investigate all intra-familial cases of abuse and those referrals in relation to childcare professionals, carers and those in positions of trust who are alleged to have abused children in their care.

WMP has conducted a review of the way in which it delivers service in this area; recommendations from the review are being implemented with a view to improving service delivery.

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic section on protecting vulnerable people.

October 2007

Strengths

- The OCU-based CAIUs are supported by the HQ-based CAPU which provides a corporate oversight of policy and an audit function. The force is one of a number of pilot sites for the child exploitation and online tracking system and is working in partnership with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) to develop this system.
- A clear commitment from the ACC (crime) to improve performance is evident in this area. A detective superintendent and detective chief inspector (DCI) have been appointed to the CAPU to ensure that changes from the reviews initiated by the force are being progressed.
- Child abuse investigation is a priority for WMP and is incorporated in the force strategic assessment and control strategy.
- The CAPU is the conduit of policy for the force. The *Child Abuse Managers Guide* provides clear guidance as to the expectations of OCUs dealing with such investigations. The CAPU has taken the National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) guidance and redrafted force policy, which is now in line with national guidance. All CAIU detective inspectors have received a personal copy of the NCPE guidance. The CAPU audits check compliance with policy. Further work is being conducted to make policy co-ordination more effective across the OCUs.
- The force has a well-established structure to provide welfare support and interventions for staff in the PVP business area, including access to external resources. Duty of care indices have been developed which allow the force to assess how well individual OCUs are succeeding in providing support to their staff. Welfare support presents opportunities for the force to identify wider staffing issues within the PVP disciplines, which are raised with OCUs and the ACPO portfolio holder as appropriate.
- Staff have a good understanding of the term 'referrals' and there is evidence that strategy meetings take place promptly and responsibilities are documented. A written record of strategy meetings is completed by social services and emailed to the CAIU the following day. Officers attend case conferences, with detective sergeants and detective inspectors attending the more serious cases including those where an allegation is made against a professional carer.
- Specialist child abuse investigation staff are not abstracted from their core role, enabling them to maintain positive working relationships with social services departments and safeguard children on a day-to-day basis.
- There are effective links between staff dealing with child abuse investigations and other related disciplines, with some staff co-located.
- Under the direction of a senior investigating officer, staff in CAIUs investigate any sudden or unexplained deaths of children.
- All detective constables complete the Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme (ICIDP) and Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) course.
- CAIUs submit quarterly reports to HQ on the quality of case investigations. These cover resources and casework demand, establishment and strength and current investigations. Quarterly performance information is fed back to senior managers to

October 2007

flag up issues in relation to workload disparity. Some OCUs hold cluster meetings with the DCIs to discuss more serious crime issues.

Work in progress

- Although a written accountability structure is in place, the ACC (crime) intends to change the lines of this structure so that OCU commanders are more clearly accountable to the ACC for performance in this area.
- The force's representation at the local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) varies across OCUs; this issue has been identified and is being addressed. The force has also recognised inconsistencies in relation to the financial support which OCUs provide to LSCBs.
- A revised child abuse investigation database is being developed whereby all child abuse investigations will be the subject of a modular crime report. Where no crime is established a no-crime reference number would be assigned, affording improved intelligence opportunities that are searchable by a greater pool of users.
- The force has piloted the national child abuse training programme and will introduce it in September 2007 for all officers with less than three years experience of child abuse investigation.
- All child abuse investigators are now trained to ICIDP/ABE standards; however, staff expressed a need for some specialist training at an early stage prior to undertaking the role. The force is seeking to address this through the Centrex child abuse training programme, which will commence in September 2007.
- Integration of the CAPU, the JPPU and the CEIT provides the force with an opportunity to create a tighter corporate framework for PVP, through a more robust audit and inspection regime across the frameworks.

Areas for improvement

- The force recognises that workloads in some OCUs exceed an indicative benchmark of 60 cases per officer annually, with some officers carrying 80 to 85 cases, although this is considered by local managers as acceptable within a risk-management framework. Whenever CAIUs do not have the capacity to deal with low-level cases these are referred to the OCU criminal investigation department for investigation. In such circumstances the CAIU should log the investigation and the outcome and ensure that files are stored in a manner consistent with that of the CAIU for future audit and retrieval. An audit of the quality of investigations conducted by OCU DCs would test whether investigative standards and multi-agency involvement are consistent with policy.
- OCU-based DCIs have overall responsibility for child abuse investigation. The oversight provided by DCIs is variable; evidence of active involvement in some OCUs contrasts with little involvement in others. The force needs to be satisfied that all DCIs are providing appropriate levels of scrutiny, in relation both to investigation of child abuse allegations and CAIU workload levels.

October 2007

- The lack of a corporate approach to weekend working and out-of-hours call-out for child abuse investigation leads to geographical variation in the service provided. The force should consider a corporate approach in the way that OCUs provide such cover.
- The CAPU has a well-developed audit process, based upon three years of audit data, which examines the quality of child abuse investigations. The audits contain valuable information which should be used by OCUs to improve service delivery.
- The CAPU audit reveals variability in the quality of the investigative records maintained by CAIU officers. On occasions, audit staff have had to revert to minutes of case conferences to obtain a clear view not only of the investigation but wider safeguarding issues. The force should set clear expectations for investigators as to the level of detail which that is recorded in investigative logs.
- Variability exists in how OCUs record child abuse referrals on two different computer systems – Docutrack and FPUCrimes. The force should define a corporate approach and identify for OCUs which of the two systems currently used is the preferred option.
- Some OCUs use job descriptions dating from 2002, which now require updating. Other OCUs operate a portfolio system based upon the integrated competency framework. The force should establish a corporate approach to job descriptions.

October 2007

Protecting Vulnerable People – Domestic Violence

GRADE	FAIR
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	13	27	2

National contextual factors

There is no statutory or common law offence as such of ‘domestic violence’; the term is generally used to cover a range of abusive behaviour, not all of which is criminal. The definition of domestic violence adopted by ACPO does, however, take account of the full range of abusive behaviour as well as the different circumstances in which it can occur:

‘any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality’.

As with the investigation of child abuse, responding to and investigating domestic violence is the responsibility of all police officers. Again, however, forces have dedicated staff within this area of work, although their roles vary. In some forces staff undertake a support/liaison role, generally acting as a single point of contact for victims and signposting and liaising with other agencies and support services; in others, staff have responsibility for carrying out investigations.

Irrespective of who carries out the investigation in domestic violence cases, an integral part of every stage is the identification of risk factors, followed by more detailed risk assessment and management. In 2004, HMIC, together with HMCPSI, published a joint thematic inspection report on the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence. At that time, risk identification, assessment and management were in the early stages of development throughout the service. Since then, there has been considerable progress in developing formal risk identification and assessment processes and - in a number of forces - the implementation of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs). Other improvements include the introduction of specialist domestic violence courts and the strengthening of joint working arrangements.

Contextual factors

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for WMP, and features as a specific priority in the force strategic assessment. The force has dedicated specialist staff to co-ordinate the force’s response to domestic abuse based in the OCU Community Safety Bureau. Specialist officers provide a tailored response and support to persons subjected to all forms of domestic abuse. WMP has a positive stance in dealing with domestic abuse and staff are aware of the force’s robust approach to domestic abuse and its support of positive action. The force is working successfully with partners, both in the public and voluntary sectors, to tackle a range of issues through multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) and specialist DV courts.

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic section on protecting vulnerable people.

October 2007

Strengths

- There is a clear commitment from the ACPO lead to set and maintain high levels of performance in this area. A detective superintendent and DCI have been appointed to the CAPU to ensure that changes generated by recent reviews are driven forward.
- The force has a well-established structure to provide welfare support and interventions for staff in the PVP business area, including access to external resources. Duty of care indices have been developed which allow the force to assess how well individual OCUs are succeeding in providing support to their staff. Welfare support presents opportunities for the force to identify wider staffing issues within the PVP disciplines, which are raised with OCUs and the ACPO portfolio holder as appropriate.
- The force has introduced the domestic abuse risk indicator model (DARIM) to manage risk. A DARIM form is completed by officers who attend domestic abuse incidents, identifying the risk to victims and noting whether any children are present. A subsequent risk assessment is undertaken by specialist domestic abuse officers so that appropriate preventive/intervention strategies can be put into place.
- Domestic abuse incidents are considered in the T&C process. On a daily basis there is a review of the action being taken to protect victims identified as high risk, as well as efforts to apprehend outstanding domestic abuse perpetrators. Further reviews are built into the fortnightly tasking meetings to ensure that positive action is being taken.
- DA is incorporated into the force strategic assessment under 'vulnerable persons'. At OCU level this features as an explicit priority. One OCU (E1) has set a control strategy for DV, allocating specific responsibilities to identified postholders within the OCU
- Front-line officers have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in relation to domestic abuse incidents. Flagging systems are in place and officers receive comprehensive information while en route to domestic abuse incidents, covering risk levels, previous incidents, the nature of the call and details of occupants. Recordings of 999 calls made in relation to domestic abuse incidents assist officers in their investigation (see Developing Practice).
- There is evidence of intrusive supervision by front-line sergeants, who attend domestic abuse incidents with staff and actively monitor how such incidents are being dealt with.
- MARACs are being held across the force area. The force is working with partners through the MARACs to commission programmes of action that will provide support and intervention in high-risk cases of domestic abuse.
- The force diversity unit has delivered workshops highlighting officers' responsibilities when dealing with forced marriages. The workshops have been supported by a poster and pamphlet campaign, with clear links being made to potential high-risk missing persons.

October 2007

- The force identifies and assesses risk by means of a risk-assessment document, which has the capacity to identify children within households where domestic abuse is taking place.

Work in progress

- The CAPU conducts detailed and thorough audits of domestic abuse incidents but the recommendations are not always implemented by OCUs. The recently appointed head of the combined CAPU is seeking to establish a more responsive structure, to support the implementation of recommendations.
- There has been a change in job description for domestic abuse officers in order to enhance their offender management capability and capacity. This varied from OCU to OCU and the force is currently reviewing how to secure a more corporate approach to dealing with domestic abuse.

Areas for improvement

- Information recorded via the DARIM risk-assessment form varies greatly in quality. Although front-line staff and supervisors have been trained (on the introduction of DARIM), the quality and content of training have been inconsistent; the force should strive to improve the quality and consistency of the DARIM forms completed by front-line officers.
- Staffing and supervision levels vary across the force – some OCUs adequately resource the number of domestic abuse officers required to meet demand, while other OCUs face constant difficulties in managing increasing demand from risk assessments, MARACs and administration. The force should ensure that OCUs have sufficient specialist resources in place to meet demand and, in particular, have the ability to manage the large numbers of risk assessments that are submitted.
- Some OCUs redeploy ‘restricted duties’ officers to domestic abuse work. This is not in itself problematic, and some assessment is made of officers’ capability and their suitability for the role, but they do not receive any formal training. The force should establish a minimum standard of training for staff deployed to specialist domestic abuse roles.
- The quality of supervision and monitoring varies greatly across the force. No corporate framework exists in relation to supervisors’ workloads, and this impinges on their ability to manage investigations effectively. Many supervisors have responsibility for other disciplines and carry their own workload, which leaves them insufficient time and capacity to supervise domestic abuse officers. The force should ensure that there is sufficient supervisory resilience within CSB, and that supervisors have clear expectations as to what is required of them.
- Domestic abuse officers attend child protection case conferences where appropriate. However, in some OCUs officers are often relied upon to conduct child protection visits and attend case conferences often as the sole police representative working outside their core area of responsibility and specialism. This places them in a difficult position and may leave the force vulnerable; the role of officers attending case conferences stipulates that attendance should be appropriate to individual roles.

October 2007

- The Victim and Witness Action Delivery Board monitors the actions of agencies intended to implement the Victims' Code, but there is limited evidence of the actual impact on performance.

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Domestic abuse

TITLE: 999 call protocol

PROBLEM:

The problem was how to identify sources of independent, supporting evidence in cases of domestic abuse. To fulfil this aim, the use of 999 calls as evidence was promoted in WMP, with a recognised need to overcome certain problems.

- Information technology issues had to be overcome to make the calls available to interviewing officers while the offender was in custody.
- There were increasing resource demands on the force communications centre to deploy officers on 999 and non-emergency calls. Waiting times are seen as unacceptable by many officers/customers.
- The use of 999 was worryingly variable across the WMP area.

SOLUTION:

A service level agreement between OCUs and the force control centre has been agreed and a protocol established for the supply of 999 call recordings relating to suspects in custody for domestic abuse offences. This provides investigating officers with real-time evidence to use in suspect interviews. The protocol has been placed on the force intranet and promoted by the HQ CAPU, and is used by officers across the force.

OUTCOME(S):

1. Due to the promotion of the protocol, more officers are aware of this method of sourcing and using independent supporting evidence.
2. Good quality call recordings are being used in an increasing number of interviews and are reportedly leading to more admissions. However, when a suspect is represented by a solicitor, the availability of the recording may prompt a 'no comment' interview.
3. Recordings are used in pre-charge advice sessions with the Crown Prosecution Service, leading to more positive charging decisions.

FORCE CONTACT: Detective Inspector Barton, Child and Adult Protection Unit, PO Box 52, Lloyd House, Colmore Circus, Queensway, Birmingham B4 6NQ

Protecting Vulnerable People – Public Protection

GRADE	FAIR
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
2	16	23	2

National contextual factors

The Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000 led to the formation of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, commonly known as MAPPA, requiring the police and probation services to work together as the Responsible Authority in each area of England and Wales to establish and review the arrangements for the assessment and management of sexual and violent offenders. Subsequent legislation brought the Prison Service into the Responsible Authority arrangements and also requires a range of social care agencies to co-operate with the Responsible Authority in the delivery of the assessment and management of risk in this area. These agencies include health, housing, education, social services, youth offending teams, Jobcentre Plus, and electronic monitoring services.

Under MAPPA, there are three categories of offender who are considered to pose a risk of serious harm:

Category 1 – Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs)

Category 2 – violent and other sex offenders

Category 3 – other offenders (with convictions that indicate they are capable of causing, and pose a risk of, serious harm).

To be managed under MAPPA, offenders must have received a conviction or caution. However, there are some people who have not been convicted or cautioned for any offence, and thus fall outside these categories, but whose behaviour nonetheless gives reasonable ground for believing a present likelihood of them committing an offence that will cause serious harm. These people are termed Potentially Dangerous Persons (PDPs).

Following risk assessment, risk management involves the use of strategies by various agencies to reduce the risk, at three levels:

- Level 1 offenders can be managed by one agency;
- Level 2 offenders require the active involvement of more than one agency;
- Level 3 offenders – the ‘critical few’ – are generally deemed to pose a high or very high risk and are managed by a multi-agency public protection panel (MAPPP).

In 2003, the Home Secretary issued MAPPA guidance to consolidate what has already been achieved since the introduction of the MAPPA in 2001 and to address a need for greater consistency in MAPPA practice. The guidance outlines four considerations that are key to the delivery of effective public protection.

October 2007

- defensible decisions;
- rigorous risk assessment;
- the delivery of risk management plans which match the identified public protection need; and,
- the evaluation of performance to improve delivery.

Contextual factors

Public protection, by its nature, is a high-risk area of policing partly because the police alone are not responsible for managing this risk in its entirety. WMP works closely with the probation service to manage those offenders who pose the greatest risk. The HQ-based JPPU oversees the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) for the force area with senior colleagues from the probation service.

WMP deploys dedicated sex offender managers to OCU CSB, who manage sex and violent offenders. These offenders are managed under the MAPPA in three categories – category 1 (registered sex offenders (RSOs)); category 2 (other sex and violent offenders); and category 3 (dangerous offenders and potentially dangerous persons). Sex offender managers conduct regular visits to monitor the behaviour of RSOs and use the Violent and Sex Offenders Register (ViSOR), a national computer system that allows information sharing between forces on recorded information.

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic section on protecting vulnerable people.

Strengths

- The force has recently (April 2007) realigned ACPO portfolio responsibilities so that vulnerability and offender management sit within the crime portfolio. This is regarded as a starting point for addressing the risk that the ACPO team recognises in relation to PVP.
- Positive relationships are evident between the force and the probation service, which support the management of sex offenders at MAPPA category 2 and 3, particularly within the JPPU.
- The force has a well-established structure to provide welfare support and interventions for staff in the PVP business area, including access to external resources. Duty of care indices have been developed which allow the force to assess how well individual OCUs are succeeding in providing support to their staff. Welfare support presents opportunities for the force to identify wider staffing issues within the PVP disciplines, which are raised with OCUs and the ACPO portfolio holder as appropriate.
- Force policy determines the frequency of visits based on the level of MAPPA management. There is a referral process for levels 1 and 2, and if there is any indication that the risk level has changed, the local panel can raise an offender from level 1 to level 2 status. If the risk is such that an offender warrants level 3 status, then a separate form must be submitted to the JPPU outlining fully the nature of the

October 2007

risk – this is accompanied by a full offender risk assessment system (OASys) assessment.

- The JPPU acts as a central point of receipt for all new registrations of sex offenders and records offender information on ViSOR. Registrations are subsequently allocated to a sex offender manager for ongoing management.
- A standard meetings template for multi-agency risk assessment panel (MARAP) meetings, which manage the risks posed by MAPPA category offenders resident on each OCU, has been devised by the JPPU. This is designed to provide a corporate approach to agendas, minutes and information.
- A range of partners, including housing, health and mental health, are involved in the MARAP meetings and contribute appropriately to discussions and decision making.
- The force paedophile unit has recently been renamed the child exploitation investigation team (CEIT), better to reflect its broader remit. The unit actively assists OCUs with sex offender management issues; where surveillance of a sex offender is needed, requests are considered through the T&C process.
- The force has tightly drafted job descriptions for the officers engaged in PVP. These are reviewed periodically by the organisational change manager.
- A structured process for recording those individuals identified as 'potentially dangerous' has been put into place in the JPPU. A designated decision maker at superintendent level determines whether a person should be classified as potentially dangerous and the details recorded on the ViSOR system.
- The force has structures and specialist staff in place to investigate online sexual offences, working with CEOP to identify and prosecute offenders.

Work in progress

- The force is introducing a dedicated MAPPA meeting process to deal specifically with those violent offenders involved in guns and gangs. This recognises that a small number of key individuals within the gang culture demand specific intervention from specialist partner resources who support mediation in this area of business (see Developing Practice). The separation of these meetings enables attendance to be tailored to include specialist staff from the police and other agencies.
- Integration of the CAPU, the JPPU and the CEIT provides the force with an opportunity to create a tighter corporate framework for PVP, through a more robust audit and inspection regime across the frameworks.

Areas for improvement

- There is no corporate policy guiding the level of resources deployed to sex offender management, or the degree to which they can be abstracted from their core role. The force should develop a rationale for staffing levels and abstractions that can be applied and monitored by OCU commanders.

October 2007

- Risk at MAPPA levels 2 and 3 is managed to a reasonable standard. However, due to the volume of RSOs on many OCUs, visits to level 1 offenders are prone to slippage. Some OCUs use neighbourhood beat officers to address visit backlogs, although this is contrary to force policy. As a result, a lack of current risk management plans at level 1 poses a risk to potential victims and to the force's reputation. While recognising that visits are only one element of the protection regime, the force should ensure that OCUs have sufficient sex offender managers in place to undertake visits and monitor their completion.
- Supervisors of sex offender managers on some OCUs have difficulty in actively supervising the staff and being involved in risk assessment, as they are overwhelmed by other responsibilities. The force should ensure that supervisory resilience at OCU level is sufficient to undertake these responsibilities.
- Some sex offender managers conduct visits to RSOs on a solo basis; the force should ensure that officers comply with guidance on the conduct of visits, and ensure that compliance is monitored by supervisors.
- The force devolves to OCUs its responsibility for training of sex offender managers, supervisors and managers responsible for public protection. It is aware that a small number of sex offender managers have not received training in Risk Matrix 2000, even though this has been available for some time. The force should address any outstanding training needs for sex offender managers, and establish a corporate minimum training requirement for all staff involved in public protection work.
- There is a lack of corporacy as to how information is entered onto the ViSOR system. The JPPU conducts ad hoc audits, but does not have the capacity for regular audits of ViSOR. The force should introduce a corporate approach to ViSOR management and a formalised audit process for public protection.
- Staff engaged in public protection are not vetted; the force should resolve this issue in respect of both officers and police staff.

October 2007

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Public protection

TITLE: Pan-Birmingham multi-agency public protection panel (MAPPP)

PROBLEM:

The West Midlands Mediation and Transformation Service (WMMTS) is a limited company, established in late 2004, emerging from dialogue between police and the community on the escalation of gun-related violence. It is now an integral part of an overall strategy designed to address gang violence across Birmingham. However, the members of WMMTS became increasingly aware that they needed support from other agencies to meet the needs of their clients, a number of whom were due to leave prison and return to a hostile environment, with a real risk that some would become either the perpetrators of serious violent crime or its victims unless they could access multi-agency interventions.

SOLUTION:

The PPO strategy and MAPPA are well established within the force area; when the force was approached by WMMTS for a solution it was able to use lessons learnt from those agendas. The force established the 'Pan-Birmingham MAPPP', including representatives from the agencies involved in MAPPA as well as police 'offender managers' engaged in the PPO strategy. The panel adopted individuals presented to it by WMMTS who were regarded as equivalent to level 3 MAPPA offenders. Management plans were created, using appropriate interventions, to move individuals to safer environments, provide employment training skills and education opportunities and thereby remove or minimise the risk to the individual and their communities. The panel only accepts individuals who pose a high level of risk. WMMTS remains engaged with them but is strongly supported by probation officers and police offender managers. The panel meets monthly to review the management plans of existing members and to adopt new subjects.

OUTCOME(S):

The panel is currently managing a small number of individuals who are all potential proactive leaders of gangs involved in gun crime; without these interventions it is highly likely that serious offences would have resulted. The process is still very new, having been established in early 2007, but each individual is fully engaged, and gun crime remains considerably lower in the West Midlands than in other comparable areas. Progress is very promising, especially considering the chaotic and dysfunctional lifestyles of the individuals. This is being used currently as a pilot programme, to be rolled out across the force area if its success continues.

FORCE CONTACT: Detective Chief Inspector Gary Campbell – 0845 113 5000, ext 7800 2967

Protecting Vulnerable People – Missing Persons

GRADE	GOOD
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	21	21	0

National contextual factors

Each year, thousands of people are reported to police as missing. Many have done so voluntarily and are safe from harm, whether or not they return home. But a number are vulnerable, because of age or health concerns, and the police service has developed well-honed systems to respond swiftly and effectively to such cases. For obvious reasons, missing children arouse particular concern, and many forces deploy 'Child Rescue Alert' to engage the media in publicising such cases. Key good practice in this framework are early recognition of critical incident potential, effective supervision of enquiries, the use of NIM problem profiles and other intelligence techniques to analyse repeat locations (eg, children's homes), and the use of an IT-based investigation tracking system such as COMPACT.

Contextual factors

WMP recorded in excess of 6,000 missing persons between April 2006 and March 2007. The force uses community policing and case tracking (COMPACT), a computerised missing persons database, to manage its investigations.

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic section on protecting vulnerable people.

Strengths

- The ACC (crime) is the ACPO lead for missing persons enquiries and missing persons policy is owned by crime support. A temporary post has been established in the major crime review team of the murder investigation unit to secure consistency in the approach to the review of long-term missing persons.
- The force has a clear policy for the investigation of missing persons, based upon NCPE guidance which is readily available to staff. Uniformed patrol officers are responsible for the initial investigation of missing persons. These officers are supported by a range of specialist resources, including an HQ-based missing persons co-ordinator, who can be called upon where required, and investigations receive good management oversight.
- COMPACT is an effective means of managing missing persons enquiries. A review of records made during the inspection shows that tasks are being completed, narratives are comprehensive and correct levels of supervision are being applied. Where necessary, critical incidents are properly declared and documented.
- An automated link between COMPACT and the Police National Computer (PNC)

October 2007

bureau has been established, ensuring that information on missing persons can be circulated nationally via the PNC in a timely manner. The system facilitates scrutiny of previous missing person reports to provide additional information and assist investigations.

- OCU commanders are well informed about missing persons normally resident on their OCU. Missing persons enquiries feature in daily T&C meetings held by the SMT to ensure that enquiries are being progressed.
- Robust review processes are in place for missing persons. Duty inspectors review ongoing enquiries at least every eight hours, with subsequent reviews by more senior and specialist officers, as triggered through the COMPACT system. Long-term missing persons are subject to peer reviews which are carried out by DCIs from different OCUs to ensure that investigative opportunities are not lost.
- Specialist staff engaged in PVP demonstrate real commitment to their role and constantly strive to deliver a high quality of service.
- Many of the OCU-based teams responsible for PVP are co-located and regularly share information across the four disciplines.
- The force has a well-established structure to provide welfare support and interventions for staff in the PVP business area, including access to external resources. Duty of care indices have been developed which allow the force to assess how well individual OCUs are succeeding in providing support to their staff. Welfare support presents opportunities for the force to identify wider staffing issues within the PVP disciplines, which are raised with OCUs and the ACPO portfolio holder as appropriate.
- Non-specialist staff have access to adequate briefing materials and information in relation to PVP work across the four disciplines.
- As and when required, officers have access to negotiators through the force control room for missing persons enquiries.
- There is evidence of partnership working with social services, Connexions and Laces (an agency involved with young people in care) to offer appropriate support to individual missing persons investigations.
- The risks relating to missing persons are kept under review and officers have a range of tactical options and resources available, such as the high-tech crime unit and financial investigation unit. If publicised more effectively, these options could be considered as appropriate at an early stage of an investigation.

Work in progress

- The appointment of a missing persons co-ordinator provides the force with an opportunity to disseminate good practice in this area, based upon NCPE guidance and good practice identified within force.
- The co-ordinator is developing an analysis of missing persons cases to identify patterns of behaviour that may influence the future deployment of resources.
- The force has conducted a review of its response to missing persons, identifying a number of areas for improvement.

Areas for improvement

- OCU control room staff do not have standard processes (such as drop-down menus) to assist them in taking reports of missing persons; the force should consider how it can best assist staff to obtain all relevant information at the initial report stage.
- The force missing persons form incorporates a risk-assessment questionnaire. However, this does not match the revised COMPACT risk assessment and should be amended so that a common risk-assessment process is used by officers.
- Some OCUs have dedicated officers who provide their contact details to families of missing persons. In principle this is a customer-focused approach, but it could leave the staff and organisation vulnerable if information is left unactioned while an officer is on rest days or leave, or if there is a delay in responding to critical information.
- Debriefing of missing persons in return interviews is inconsistent in that there is no co-ordinated approach to the gathering of information and intelligence. The force should give guidance to officers on the appropriate structure for return interviews.

Appendix: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ABE	Achieving Best Evidence
ACC	assistant chief constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ASB	anti-social behaviour

B

BCU	basic command unit
BME	black and minority ethnic

C

CAIU	child abuse investigation unit
CAPU	child and adult protection unit
CEIT	child exploitation investigation team
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre
COMPACT	community policing and case tracking
CSB	community safety bureau
CT	counter-terrorism

D

DARIM	domestic abuse risk indicator model
DCI	detective chief inspector
DV	domestic violence

H

HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HQ	headquarters

I

ICIDP Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme

J

JPPU joint public protection unit

K

KIN key individual network

L

LEAN LEAN systems thinking focuses on ways in which wasted effort can be eliminated from processes to ensure optimum efficiency

LSCB local safeguarding children board

M

MAPPA multi-agency public protection arrangements

MAPPP multi-agency public protection panel

MARAC multi-agency risk assessment conference

MARAP multi-agency risk assessment panel

MSBCU most similar basic command unit

N

NCPE National Centre for Policing Excellence

NIM National Intelligence Model

NIMDU National Intelligence Model development unit

O

OCU operational command unit

P

PA	police authority
PCSO	police community support officer
PNC	Police National Computer
PPO	prolific and other priority offender
PRDi	performance review department information
PVP	protecting vulnerable people

R

RSO	registered sex offender
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S

SC	special constable
SMT	senior management team
SPOC	single point of contact

T

T&C	tasking and co-ordination
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V

ViSOR	Violent and Sex Offenders Register
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W

WMMTS	West Midlands Mediation and Transformation Service
WMP	West Midlands Police